

and human trafficking, and the infiltration of Islamist terrorists requires the success of economic and political freedoms—and of the rule of law—in Latin America. We must be more vigilant—and more decisive—in defending our interests in our own hemisphere.

And by the way, the notion that we should “lead from behind” would have been incomprehensible even to the Democrat who preceded President Obama. In his second inaugural address, President Bill Clinton said that “America stands alone as the world’s indispensable nation.” That is as true today as it was in 1997.

If America refuses to lead, who will combat international outlaws? Who will stop terrorists and weapons proliferators? Who will deal with the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs? The rising disorder in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia? The growing challenge from China which seeks to dominate East Asia, but won’t even let its own people use Google?

The world counts on America. And whether we like it or not, there is virtually no aspect of our daily lives that is not directly impacted by what happens in the world around us. We can choose to ignore global problems, but global problems will not ignore us.

Yet our ability to lead is threatened. It’s threatened not by any external foe, but rather by our own fiscal woes.

This year, the national debt surpassed the size of our economy and it will continue to grow unless we get it under control.

Now, I am a strong advocate of cutting unnecessary and wasteful spending, but the defense budget is not the biggest driver of our debt—it accounts for roughly twenty percent of our annual federal spending. By contrast, entitlement programs swallow more than half the budget and they are the main drivers of our debt.

The Pentagon already faced sharp cuts. During his last two years in office, Secretary of Defense Gates cut or curtailed procurement programs that, if taken to completion, would have cost \$300 billion. This summer, the President and congressional leaders agreed to cut another \$350 billion from the defense budget over the next ten years.

Those cuts by themselves alone are worrisome enough but what is more worrisome is what’s looming: In the worst case scenario, if the so-called Debt Super Committee doesn’t reach any deal at all, the Pentagon could stand to be slashed by more than \$1 trillion over ten years.

Our new secretary of defense—himself is a well-known budget hawk—has warned that cutbacks of this scale would have a “devastating effect on our national defense.” I can but echo Leon Panetta’s words.

The American armed forces have been one of the greatest forces of good in the world during the past century. They stopped Nazism and Communism and other evils such as Serbian ethnic-cleansing. They have helped birthed democracies from Germany to Iraq. They have delivered relief supplies, and performed countless tasks in service to our nation.

All they have ever asked for in return is that we provide them the tools to get the job done—and that we look after them and their families. They have never failed us in our time of need.

We must not fail them now. We must maintain a strong national defense.

Foreign aid is also an important part of America’s foreign policy leadership. While we certainly must be careful about spending money on foreign aid, the reality is that it is not the reason we have a growing debt problem.

If it is done right, and when done in partnership with the private sector and faith-based community, foreign aid spreads Amer-

ica’s influence around the world in a positive way. Let me give you an example: the Bush Administration’s program to provide HIV medicine to Africa has not only saved lives, it has increased America’s influence across the continent. These are allies in the future that can be our partners, not just in our political struggles on the world stage, but in economic trade. And a world where people are prosperous and free to grow their economies and pursue their own dreams is a better world for all of us.

I began by quoting the words of Jesse Helms and Ronald Reagan. In closing, let me recall the great words of one of the most important Democrat leaders of the 20th Century—Harry S. Truman. In 1951, speaking to the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., this is what he said:

“I have the feeling that God has created us and brought us to our present position of power and strength for some great purpose. It is not given to us to know fully what that purpose is. But I think we may be sure of one thing. And that is that our country is intended to do all it can in cooperating with other nations to help create peace and preserve peace in the world. It is given to us to defend the spiritual values—the moral code—against the vast forces of evil that seek to destroy them.”

There are still vast forces of evil seeking to destroy us. The form of the threat has changed since Truman’s time. But evil remains potent—and America remains the strongest line of defense, often the only line of defense.

I pray that we will continue to find the wisdom and courage—and resources—to act effectively in the defense of our moral code—the same code that we share with all civilized people. The world needed a strong America in Truman’s time. And if this is to be another American Century, the world needs a strong America now.

Because freedom cannot survive without us.

Thank you so much for having me. May God bless all of you and may God bless our country. Thank you.

REMEMBERING COMPTROLLER GENERAL ELMER B. STAATS

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to the memory of Elmer B. Staats, one of the great civil servants of the post-World War II era. A former Comptroller General of the United States and head of the General Accounting Office, as GAO was then called, Mr. Staats died July 23 in Washington at the age of 97.

Elmer Staats had the distinction of serving under every U.S. President from Franklin Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan. But more important than the longevity of his career was his record of professional achievement. A leading figure in the world of public administration and government accountability, Elmer Staats was renowned for his dedication to constructive change and good government principles.

Appointed Comptroller General in 1966, Elmer Staats helped lay the foundation for the modern-day GAO. He transformed it from an agency primarily known for financial audit work to one that evaluates the effectiveness of virtually every Federal activity at home and abroad, from antipoverty programs to military spending to investments in infrastructure.

At the start of Staats’ tenure at GAO, accountants comprised more than 95 percent of the agency’s professional staff. By the time he retired in 1981, the agency’s workforce included such diverse professionals as economists, social scientists, attorneys, and computer experts—all career employees hired on the basis of their knowledge, skills, and ability.

Under Elmer Staats, GAO took a lead role in issuing auditing guidance. In 1972, the Comptroller General issued the first edition of what has come to be known as the “Yellow Book”—the final word on government auditing standards. He also directed GAO to issue guidance to help state and local auditors and was instrumental in establishing intergovernmental audit forums in the 1970s.

In addition, Elmer Staats sought to strengthen ties with the international auditing community through his active involvement and leadership in the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions. He founded GAO’s International Auditor Fellowship Program in 1979, which enables auditors from other countries to meet with GAO staff and acquire new knowledge and perspectives.

His is a living legacy that is still delivering results, both for Congress and the American people. Just name a Federal program or policy, GAO has probably reviewed it and made suggestions for improvement. Last year, measurable financial benefits from GAO work totaled nearly \$50 billion, an \$87 return on every dollar invested in GAO.

Elmer Boyd Staats was born in Richfield, KS, in 1914. His family were wheat farmers. The only one of his eight siblings to attend college, Elmer Staats graduated Phi Beta Kappa from McPherson College in 1935, and later earned a master’s degree in political science and economics from the University of Kansas and a doctorate in political economy at the University of Minnesota, where he wrote his dissertation on the new Social Security Administration.

Elmer Staats’ career in the Federal Government began in 1939, when he joined the Bureau of the Budget, now the Office of Management and Budget. His talents were recognized early on, and he served in high-level posts at the Bureau under Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson. Eventually, he became the Bureau’s Deputy Director before President Johnson appointed him to a 15-year term as the fifth Comptroller General of the United States. He held that post through the administrations of Presidents Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter, and into the early months of the Reagan administration.

After leaving GAO, Elmer Staats became the president and later chairman of the board of trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation. He was a member of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board from 1984 to 1990. During the 1990s, he served as the

first chairman of the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board.

Elmer Staats helped found the American Society for Public Administration in 1939 and later served as its national president and vice president. He was also a founding member in 1967 of the National Academy of Public Administration and remained a trusted advisor on many Academy projects over the years. He received numerous awards for distinguished public service, along with honorary degrees from eight universities. He was elected to the Accounting Hall of Fame in 1981.

When asked whether he was a Republican or a Democrat, Elmer always politely but firmly declined to answer. In fact, he was famous for having a needlepoint pillow in his office that featured an elephant on one side and a donkey on the other. The message about his and GAO's nonpartisan role in government was clear.

As Bob Schieffer observed in a recent commentary on "Face the Nation," Elmer Staats' reputation in Washington was such that you "knew you could take what his agency reported to the bank—its facts were seldom disputed, its neutrality never challenged, his political affiliation never known."

I want to express my gratitude for Elmer Staats' many years of exemplary service to our Nation. His intelligence, dedication, and integrity will be missed. At the same time, Elmer Staats set an example for the type of men and women who will be needed to help lead our government in the future—individuals of outstanding ability, sound character, and a genuine commitment to the greater good.

My thoughts and prayers go to his three children—David Staats, Deborah Sanders, and Catharine Taubman—and to his three grandchildren and great-granddaughter.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this Saturday, the Nation marks the 224th anniversary of the day when the Founders signed the fundamental charter for our democracy—the Constitution of the United States. During the Constitutional Convention, the delegates debated hundreds of issues and proposals before crafting the final charter. Thankfully, the Founders had the foresight to know that their debate would not be the final word on the subject. The work of defining our Nation—ensuring protection of rights for all Americans—would continue, as we strive to create "a more perfect union."

It was through the leadership of the late Senator Robert C. Byrd that the Congress began to officially celebrate the signing of the Constitution, calling the September 17 anniversary Constitution Day. Senator Byrd understood the importance of ensuring that future generations value our Nation's founding charter. This week, in schools across the country, students will learn

about the Constitutional Convention and the meaning of Constitution Day.

For well over two centuries, the Constitution has allowed America to flourish and, importantly, adapt to new challenges. Since the inclusion of the Bill of Rights in 1791, the Constitution has been amended just 17 times. There has been much discussion of late about amending our Nation's fundamental charter. As chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, that is not something that I take lightly. Proposing amendments to the Constitution should not be a reflexive response to political threats. Each Member of Congress swears to support and defend the Constitution; it should be treated with the reverence it deserves, not as leverage in heated political debate. While I certainly believe that the Constitution has been improved over time in our effort to create a more perfect union, those amendments were thoroughly considered and debated over time. Before we alter our national charter, we must openly consider whether such amendment would hamstring future generations.

Pressure groups may demand that elected representatives sign pledges about what they will and will not do if elected to office. The pledge I follow—the one I was honored to make again at the beginning of this Congress—is to uphold the Constitution. I take that pledge seriously. "We the People" owe a great debt to the Framers of our Constitution. And as we commemorate the signing of the Constitution of the United States of America 224 years ago, I hope all Americans will take this opportunity to read the words of our founding charter and learn about how it protects us all.

TRIBUTE TO KEEGAN BRADLEY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, with the Senate now back in session, as a Vermonter I would like to call the Senate's attention to Mr. Keegan Bradley's first-place finish in the 93rd Professional Golf Association's Championship Tournament on Sunday, August 14. Mr. Bradley is the first male golfer born in Vermont to win a major PGA Championship.

Keegan Bradley has earned a permanent place for himself, and Vermont, in the record books. As a rookie golfer, his participation in the 2011 PGA Championship is his first major tournament, making him one of only three rookie golfers ever to place first in a major tournament debut. This win also marks the end of a six-major tournament dry spell for American golfers. In order to win this year's PGA Championship, Bradley needed to demonstrate tenacity and determination. Keegan successfully came back from a four-shot deficit in the last three holes of the tournament, proving his ability to focus and overcome obstacles.

His PGA Championship win extends Mr. Bradley's successful start to his professional golf career. Most notably,

he placed first in another PGA tournament earlier this year, the HP Byron Nelson Championship in Texas. In 2011 he has also finished in the top 10 in 4 PGA tournaments, as well as having finished within the top 25 in 10 others.

Even more impressively, Keegan Bradley has spent many of his younger years living in the New England area, with seasonal weather that did not always afford him the luxury of training year-round. This resulted in much time-sensitive dedication and focus, as winter weather inhibits year-round outside practice in our part of the country.

Keegan Bradley was born in Woodstock, VT, in 1986 and attended Woodstock High School. He is the son of Mr. Mark Bradley, golf professional at Crown Point Golf Club, and Mrs. Kay Bradley. Keegan is also the nephew of Ms. Pat Bradley, a Ladies Professional Golf Association Hall-of-Famer. I am proud to recognize Keegan Bradley for his accomplishment, both as a Vermonter and a professional golfer. I join all Vermonters in wishing him many more years of success.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:23 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2218. An act to amend the charter school program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 2218. An act to amend the charter school program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the second time, and placed on the calendar: